

House Republican Press Release

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Reps. Greene, DelGobbo Back Bill to Provide Access to Free and Reduced Cost Prescription Drugs



Announce Pharmaceutical Patient Assistance Outreach Program

Hartford, CT- In an effort to provide free or reduced cost prescription drugs to Connecticut citizens, State Rep. Len Greene (R-Beacon Falls) and Kevin M. DelGobbo, (R-Naugatuck) today joined state legislative leaders in introducing a bill to establish a Pharmacy Outreach Program that would inform underinsured or uninsured patients of help that may be available to them.

Reps. Greene and DelGobbo are cosponsors of House Bill 6854. The legislation would establish a Pharmacy Outreach Program within the UConn School of Pharmacy in order to assist residents in obtaining reduced cost or no cost prescription medications or nonprescription medications from participating manufacturers, and educating them about health care issues relating to their medications.

“One of the things I hear about constantly from constituents is the high cost of prescription drugs,” said State Representative Len Greene, who serves as Ranking Member of the Legislature’s General Law Committee. “Many people may not know there are programs that can help them more easily obtain their medications,”

Rep. DelGobbo added, “I think this is an outstanding initiative to help Connecticut consumers. This program could provide critical access to people for prescription drugs.”

If approved by the General Law Committee, the bill would then move forward to the full General Assembly. The legislation would create a single point of access for citizens by maintaining a state-wide toll free telephone number staffed by students from the UConn School of Pharmacy to counsel and advise eligible persons on how to access more than 275 public and private patient assistance programs, including more than 150 programs offered by pharmaceutical companies.

“This centralized system will help people find out what assistance they are eligible to receive,” said Rep. Greene”

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) has long-standing patient assistance programs that have been available through an interactive web

site (www.HelpingPatients.org) which provides a comprehensive one-stop link to thousands of medicines offered through hundreds of patient assistance programs.

In 2004, millions of patients across America received over 22 million prescriptions from PhRMA patient assistance programs with a wholesale value topping \$4.17 billion. In 2003, over 18 million prescriptions were filled with an estimated wholesale value of \$3.4 billion.

The website helps direct patients to the patient assistance programs by maintaining a database of all the member companies that conduct patient assistance programs and which medicines are covered. It also describes how to request assistance, provides direction on the application process, and explains eligibility requirements for each company and program. In 2003, the program helped 6.2 million underinsured and uninsured patients obtain more than 17.8 million prescriptions.

An example of current programs that would be accessed under the legislation are the Together Rx™ and Together Rx Access, which offer real savings on more than 430 FDA-approved brand-name prescriptions. The programs are available to individuals who lack public or private prescription drug coverage. The Together Rx™ and Together Rx Access participants may receive savings of approximately 20 percent to 40 percent, and in some cases more, on prescriptions for brand-name medicines. The companies are: Abbott, AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen, members of the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, Novartis, Ortho-McNeil, sanofi-aventis Group, Pfizer, and Takeda and Tap.